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Thirty-fourth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

I. Introduction

1. By its resolution 2112 (2013), the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) until 30 June 2014 and requested me to provide a final report by 15 May 2014. The present report includes an update on major developments since my midterm report dated 24 December 2013 (S/2013/761), outlines the main findings of the strategic review of Côte d'Ivoire and provides my recommendations for UNOCI, including the extension of its mandate.

II. Political situation

2. The President of Côte d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, and his Government continued to take steps to further ease political tensions, alleviate insecurity and accelerate economic recovery. In his New Year's address to the nation, the President underscored the importance of reconciliation and national cohesion and, to that end, expressed his Government's determination to continue its dialogue with the political opposition and make further conciliatory gestures to those who supported the former regime.

3. The year 2013 began with constructive momentum with respect to political dialogue — including within the context of the permanent framework for dialogue, bilaterally between the Government and the former ruling party, the Front populaire ivoirien (FPI), and among opposition political parties. The focus was on establishing new mechanisms to advance dialogue and negotiations with the Government.

4. During its direct talks with the Government on 15 January, FPI was requested to encourage its supporters living in exile to return home. It was also requested to submit a list of FPI members remaining in detention or whose assets were frozen in connection with the post-elections crisis. Earlier, the Government had announced its intention to unfreeze the bank accounts of persons associated with the former regime who had provisionally been released from detention and to reintegrate them into public service. During the period from 27 January to 7 February, a further 124 associates of former President Laurent Gbagbo who had been detained on suspicion of endangering State security were released on bail. In addition, on 3 April, the Public Prosecutor of Abidjan announced that 43 bank accounts had been

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unfrozen. FPI reacted by urging the unfreezing of an additional 260 accounts belonging to associates of the former President.

5. The President made repeated calls for Ivorians living in exile to return to Côte d'Ivoire. In January, the former managing director of the port of Abidjan, who had been closely associated with the former regime, returned, as did the former Minister of Defence and the former Minister of Mines and Energy. In January, the Minister in charge of defence welcomed 1,443 returning members of the former Ivorian defence and security forces who had fled the country during the electoral crisis.

6. On 3 February 2014, the President extended until September 2014 the mandate of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission, whose initial two-year mandate had expired in September 2013. The Commission focuses on the following tasks: (a) truth-seeking; (b) public hearings for victims, perpetrators and witnesses; and (c) recommendations to the Government regarding reparations or other options for healing. On 6 February, the Commission met with the FPI president, who stressed the importance of national reconciliation and publicly expressed support for the work of the Commission. Between 27 February and 12 March, the Commission piloted the truth-seeking process in eight cities, recording testimonies from 2,106 victims about incidents of killing, abduction, disappearance, serious injury, kidnapping, torture, rape and the looting and destruction of property. The Commission subsequently decided to extend the process throughout the country. Meanwhile, the report it submitted to the President in November 2013 has not yet been made public.

7. Notwithstanding the positive start to the year, the political environment became increasingly fraught in the following months. On 20 March, the Government decided to transfer Charles Blé Goudé, former leader of the Young Patriots, to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. That was considered by FPI to be a serious obstacle to national reconciliation. Subsequently, FPI announced that it would no longer participate in a dialogue with the Government. On 26 March, 12 opposition parties under FPI coordination announced the creation of a new coalition, the Alliance des forces démocratiques de Côte d'Ivoire. Then, on 29 March, FPI issued a communiqué in which it expressed its grievances in respect of governance, demanded the dissolution of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and called for a boycott of the national census that had begun on 17 March, over concern that the results would not accurately reflect the country's demographics. On 3 April, the Alliance called for the establishment of a new framework for discussions with the Government, proposing the need for a neutral mediator, clear timelines and a follow-up mechanism. FPI also announced that a dialogue would not resume until a mediator had been appointed to follow-up on the agreements reached by both sides.

8. Meanwhile, some progress was made with respect to election-related reforms. On 8 January, the chair of the Independent Electoral Commission announced that all political parties and stakeholders would be consulted on the reform of the Commission and the revision of the voters' list. On 8 March, the National Democratic Institute made public recommendations for electoral reform that emphasized the importance of dialogue, timely implementation of electoral reforms and reconciliation, in order to instil confidence in the political and electoral processes. On 1 April, the Government held discussions on restructuring the Commission within the context of the permanent framework of dialogue; FPI

declined to attend the discussions. On 9 April, the Council of Ministers approved a draft bill on the composition, organization and functioning of the Commission that was submitted to the National Assembly for approval. The proposals would reduce the number of members of the Commission's Central Committee from 31 to 13, of whom 4 would be appointed by the President, 3 would be representatives of the ruling political coalition, 3 would be representatives of the political opposition and 3 would be representatives of civil society. In addition, the number of departmental and local committees would be reduced. FPI criticized the proposals and, on 23 April, the Alliance proposed an alternative formula. Other opposition leaders also expressed concern that proposals made during the meeting of 1 April had not been taken into account.

9. Political stakeholders continued to position themselves for the 2015 elections. On 9 April, the president of the Parti démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire, Henri Konan Bedié, met with the secretaries-general of the parties in the ruling Rassemblement des houphouétistes pour la démocratie et la paix, to discuss ways to reinvigorate the coalition. New alliances also emerged among the opposition political parties.

10. Limited progress was made in addressing issues at the root of the Ivorian crisis, namely nationality and land. The nationality law adopted by the National Assembly in August 2013 entered into force in April. Meanwhile, the United Nations continued to support the preparation of draft laws aimed at improving democratic oversight and advocated for the separation of executive and legislative powers.

National and international justice

11. Efforts to bring to justice alleged perpetrators of violent crimes committed during the post-elections crisis continued. A presidential decree of 30 December extended the mandate of the special investigative unit established in 2011 to investigate crimes perpetrated during the post-elections crisis, reconfiguring the unit as a special investigation and examination cell with enhanced capability and resources. The focus, however, remained primarily on persons affiliated with the former regime.

12. Proceedings related to the confirmation of charges against former President Gbagbo continued at the International Criminal Court. Meanwhile, on 12 March, the Court announced that Mr. Gbagbo would remain in detention pending trial, to ensure his appearance before the Court and prevent any possible obstruction to investigations or court proceedings.

13. On 3 March, the International Criminal Court rejected the Government's call for the handover of Mr. Blé Goudé to be postponed and requested his immediate transfer to The Hague. Following the Council of Ministers' decision to transfer Mr. Blé Goudé (see para. 7 above), on 22 March he was surrendered to the Court. Mr. Blé Goudé made an initial appearance before the pretrial chamber on 27 March.

14. Former First Lady Simone Gbagbo, who remained in detention in Odienné, was heard by a judge of the national special investigation and examination cell on 4 and 5 February. On 25 February, the Government provided the pretrial chamber of the International Criminal Court with updated information about the national proceedings and reaffirmed its willingness to hold Ms. Gbagbo's trial in Côte d'Ivoire. On 8 April, the defence team confirmed to the Court that Ms. Gbagbo preferred to be tried in Côte d'Ivoire.

15. On 3 February, the military prosecutor exonerated 10 high-ranking police officers who had been accused of disobeying orders during the post-elections crisis. On 12 February, the military tribunal found the former director of the national police academy guilty of misappropriation of funds and sentenced her and four of the six charged police officers to two years of imprisonment. On 24 April, the Supreme Court postponed, for the third time, hearing the appeal of the former head of the Republican Guard, who had been found guilty in October 2012 for crimes committed during the post-elections crisis and the murder of former President Robert Guéï.

III. Security situation

16. The security situation in Côte d'Ivoire remained generally stable but fragile owing to the high prevalence of violent crime and insecurity near the border with Liberia. Insecurity was characterized by armed robbery, banditry and burglary, in many instances committed by elements of the Forces républicaines de Côte d'Ivoire (FRCI), dozos (traditional hunters) and former combatants. Intercommunal violence, particularly in the north and south-east, continued to be reported, while the activities of uncontrolled armed groups and former combatants remained a threat to stability. In February and March, demonstrations of former combatants in Man and Bouaké became violent.

17. On 23 February, armed individuals attacked FRCI positions in Fete and Grabo, near the border with Liberia, killing four FRCI soldiers and a civilian; the incident represented a setback since the last major attack in that area in March 2013. UNOCI forces exchanged fire with the assailants. National security forces responded by conducting an operation during which 32 persons were arrested on suspicion of committing crimes against State security.

18. Explosive remnants of war and unsecured weapons and ammunition remained a threat. UNOCI and the Mine Action Service of the United Nations assisted the Government in strengthening national capacity to manage and secure weapons and ammunition through the construction and rehabilitation of three storage sites. The Service also supported the destruction of three items of unexploded ordnance and over 2,500 kg of ammunition.

IV. Regional issues

19. At the forty-fourth ordinary session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Yamoussoukro on 28 and 29 March, the President of Ghana, John Dramani Mahama, was elected to succeed the President of Côte d'Ivoire as Chair of the Authority. During the period under review, the President of Côte d'Ivoire met with the King of Morocco and the Heads of State of Benin, Burkina Faso and Ghana.

20. On 22 March, an outbreak of the Ebola virus was confirmed in the Guinée Forestière area near Guinea's border with Liberia and, subsequently, in Conakry. Following an alert from the World Health Organization urging heightened surveillance for illnesses consistent with viral haemorrhagic fever, the countries neighbouring Guinea instituted measures along the land borders to protect those at

risk and prevent the virus from spreading. Suspected cases of infection have been ruled out in Mali, while in Guinea and Liberia 143 and 11 related fatalities were recorded, respectively, as at 1 May. No cases of Ebola virus infection had been reported in Côte d'Ivoire as at 1 May and the borders with Guinea and Liberia officially remained open. However, incidents involving some FRCI elements preventing movement across the border with Liberia were reported.

21. UNOCI continued to support the implementation of the cross-border security strategy of the Mano River Union, including meetings of the joint Côte d'Ivoire-Liberia border security and confidence-building units. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, supported by UNOCI and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), prepared a draft ministerial order for the establishment of a transnational crime unit in the context of the West Africa Coast Initiative, which the United Nations Office for West Africa and UNOCI stressed should be prioritized.

22. Inter-mission cooperation between UNOCI and the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) continued, including in the context of joint border operations, mirrored patrolling along the border and the use of UNOCI armed helicopters along and across the shared border. Ivorian and Liberian security forces also continued to cooperate, although the Ebola virus outbreak resulted in the temporary suspension of joint activities. UNOCI also continued to monitor embargo violations in support of the Government and the Group of Experts on Côte d'Ivoire.

V. Reform of security and rule of law institutions

23. The Government prioritized the implementation of the national strategy on security sector reform and took steps to improve gender balance in security institutions, placing emphasis on the gendarmerie. The importance of equal participation was reaffirmed during the first national day of women in the military and paramilitary, held on 7 March. Measures were also taken for the resumption by dozos of their customary role as traditional hunters.

24. During the reporting period, the Government developed terms of reference for a vetting mechanism for the police. With UNOCI support, the secretariat of the National Security Council accelerated the decentralization of security sector reform, including through the establishment of local committees. The Council also facilitated coordination with line ministries and released a quarterly magazine and newsletter. The Government created a commission to investigate crimes committed during the post-elections crisis.

25. On 22 January, the President of Côte d'Ivoire promoted more than 500 FRCI soldiers and gendarmes, including several commanders of the former Forces nouvelles. On 9 February, FPI demanded the suspension of the 2011 decree unifying the former national armed forces of Côte d'Ivoire and the Forces nouvelles, and requested that FRCI be renamed "National Armed Forces of Côte d'Ivoire".

26. The police and the gendarmerie were partially operational throughout the country. Only in Abidjan, Bouaké and Daloa were the security services adequately equipped and resourced, limiting in most areas their ability to conduct investigations and fight crime, including sexual and gender-based violence. The population continued to lack confidence in the security services.

27. Challenges remained with respect to taking forward the pending national police strategic plan, restoring public trust in national security forces, securing political will to implement sectoral reforms, reinforcing the role of civil society and accelerating the pace of reforms. The overall fragility of institutions had an impact on engagement in regional security initiatives.

Justice and corrections

28. Progress was made in implementing the national justice sector reform strategy. All 40 courts became fully functional and justice personnel were deployed throughout the country. Legal clinics in Bondoukou, Bouaké, Guiglo, Korhogo, Man and San Pedro provided free consultations to approximately 3,000 people; in some 40 per cent of cases, the consultations related to children's rights. The courts responsible for serious crimes, however, did not convene.

29. In February, the National Institute for Judicial Training revised training curricula for judges, prison officers, court clerks and social workers and, in March, efforts were initiated to develop an ethics charter for the judiciary and codes to address corruption. Efforts were also under way with respect to free legal aid and bringing criminal and civil laws into compliance with human rights standards. In reforming the military justice system, however, efforts still needed to be made to ensure compliance with international standards and to increase accountability.

30. UNOCI supported the Government with prison reform, providing advice on prison management, closing security gaps and developing operating procedures, as well as addressing challenges resulting from integrating former combatants into the prison administration. All 34 prisons were fully functional, although security remained a challenge: seven incidents of prison breaks involving 14 fugitives were recorded.

VI. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration

31. With support from UNOCI, the national Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration finalized its programmatic framework, which was presented to international partners in February. It also developed partnerships with national financial, training and employment institutions, as well as international donors. The European Union and the African Development Bank committed €14 million and $30 million, respectively, to supporting the Authority's programme of work.

32. As at 1 May, 22,590 former combatants, including 1,596 women, were disarmed and demobilized, while 6,939 weapons, 531,583 rounds of small arms ammunition and 8,512 items of explosive ordnance were collected. Some 70 disarmament and demobilization operations were conducted at the disarmament, demobilization and reinsertion camp near Abidjan, involving mainly young FRCI associates and former Forces nouvelles elements. Smaller scale disarmament and demobilization operations also took place in the centre and south-west of the country. However, inclusion and transparency remained a challenge. The rate of inclusion of combatants who had been affiliated with former President Gbagbo remained low, at 13 per cent, while a significant number of persons who had not been registered in the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration database were included retroactively.

33. UNOCI launched eight community reinsertion projects on 25 February. Some 250 former combatants and community members engaged in income-generation activities. In addition, in March, the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration introduced a resocialization programme that included training in civic responsibility, human rights, gender and HIV/AIDS. As at 1 May, 30,455 persons had benefited from reinsertion support, of whom 19,986 were fully reintegrated.

34. In support of civilian disarmament, the National Commission on Small Arms and Light Weapons, with the support of the Mine Action Service, conducted seven weapon-collection operations in Abidjan and Bouaké, collecting 104 weapons, 105 grenades, 49 fuses, 11 mortars, 13 rockets and 7,690 rounds of ammunition.

VII. Extension of State authority

35. The number of operational sub-prefectures increased from 358 to 422 following the nomination of members of the prefectural corps in January, but the effectiveness of local administrations remained hampered by poor infrastructure, limited resources and a lack of technical and professional capacity, which undermined service provision. The Peacebuilding Fund continued to support the rehabilitation of some public infrastructure in the west. Fiscal administration was not restored in most areas, while customs services and border surveillance remained inadequate owing to coordination and resource constraints.

36. Local authorities supported social cohesion despite the fact that the national programme launched in May 2013 had not been finalized owing to financial constraints. To enhance United Nations support of national efforts, in February my Special Representative, together with the United Nations country team and the World Bank, visited western Côte d'Ivoire to consult local stakeholders about priority needs in the areas of social cohesion, reconciliation, development, security and human rights.

37. Regional and municipal councils were installed following the April 2013 local elections, although challenges persisted with respect to the division of labour among the national, regional and municipal levels, funding shortfalls and law and order issues. In April, UNOCI and UNDP brought together the regional councils, prefects and mayors to discuss the division of labour and development priorities.

VIII. Human rights

38. The human rights situation continued to be characterized by reports of summary execution, forced disappearance, arbitrary arrest, illegal detention, torture, racketeering and extortion. Since my previous report, FRCI elements, dozos and former combatants have reportedly been involved in 10 extrajudicial killings, 52 cases of arbitrary arrest and detention and 6 incidents of extortion and racketeering. The excessive use of force by FRCI elements threatened the right to life, liberty and security of civilians. Prosecution of alleged FRCI perpetrators remained infrequent, contributing to a perception among the public of impunity and undermining confidence.

39. The conditions of persons detained in connection with the post-elections crisis remained inconsistent with due process and other human rights guarantees. Some

were held in unofficial detention facilities without access to health services or to the advice of defence counsel. Following the attacks at Grabo and Fete (see para. 17 above), UNOCI found that some FRCI soldiers had been involved in the torture and ill-treatment of detainees who were being kept at unofficial facilities until their transfer to Abidjan prison on 4 March.

40. During the early hours of 17 February, Liberian and Ivorian security officials collaborated to forcibly return 21 Ivorians, including 15 registered refugees, from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire. The Ivorians and five Liberian nationals who had been arrested by Liberian officials for allegedly planning to destabilize the two countries were detained without respect for their due process rights. Upon arrival in Abidjan, the Ivorians were eventually charged with disturbing the public order. On 1 March, six were released for lack of evidence and returned on 6 March to a refugee camp in Liberia with assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The remaining 15 were transferred to the prison in Abidjan.

41. On 10 January, the Government adopted two interministerial decisions setting out the salaries and other benefits of staff of the National Commission for Human Rights. While providing evidence of institutional progress with respect to human rights, the new framework also revealed excessive administrative control over the Commission by the Ministry of Justice, Human Rights and Public Liberties, which is not fully in compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights.

Sexual violence

42. As at 1 May, 10 forced or early marriages, 171 cases of rape, including 19 gang rapes, and 4 assaults on boys were reported. Impunity for such violations remained a challenge, given the low prosecution rates, the reclassification of rape as "indecent assault" and the high cost of medical certificates required to confirm rape. There continued to be a reliance on traditional mechanisms to settle such cases owing to limited investigative capacity, communal pressure and fear of stigmatization, as well as a lack of trust in the criminal justice system. The Government has yet to allocate resources for the national strategy against sexual and gender-based violence launched in July 2013.

Child protection

43. As at 1 May, 60 cases of child trafficking for labour were reported, with little apparent effort to investigate or otherwise follow up on these cases. During the period under review, 31 cases of female genital mutilation were reported; 18 girls escaped circumcision following the intervention of gendarmes in Djoman. Birth registration also remained a priority; to date, 2.8 million children are unregistered. Meanwhile, the draft national child protection policy has yet to be adopted by the Council of Ministers.

44. Juvenile offenders continued to suffer from prolonged detention, and their conditions of detention were often inconsistent with juvenile justice standards, given the lack of guaranteed separation of minors from adults in prison, inadequate health services and the absence of sufficient educational or vocational opportunities to facilitate rehabilitation.

IX. Media

45. The resurgence of incendiary and false information, as well as hate speech, in some media outlets continued. The National Press Council reprimanded and/or suspended some newspapers and a magazine for abusive language and organized awareness-raising campaigns for the media. In March, the Government urged the media to act responsibly in its coverage of the reconciliation process. UNOCI carried out activities to enhance professional ethics and responsibility in covering sensitive developments, while ONUCI FM continued to broadcast impartial information throughout the country.

X. Economic situation

46. In 2013, the gross domestic product grew by 8.1 per cent and is projected to grow by 8.2 per cent in 2014. Although public spending increased by 9 per cent in 2013, external balances and debt remained within the performance criteria set by the International Monetary Fund. Increased spending was linked to increased expenditure on civil servants, after the Government doubled the minimum wage to 60,000 CFA francs (approximately $120) per month. There are also plans to recruit 18,933 new employees in 2014, including 3,641 former combatants.

47. The development of the private sector remained a priority. In January, the Government organized an investors' forum to promote opportunities in agribusiness, industry and mining. Investment pledges amounted to $886 million, of which $326 million in the form of public-private partnerships and $560 million from private investors.

48. Mining activities also intensified. With the inauguration of two new gold mines in January, the number of exploited mines reached five and production was estimated at between 13 and 16 tons per year, an increase of more than 20 per cent. On 27 January, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a mining code based on transparency, traceability and social responsibility for the management of environmental risks.

49. Despite the growth potential of Côte d'Ivoire, limited employment opportunities, particularly for youth, remained a challenge. In 2013, some 30,000 jobs were created in the formal sector and 100,000 in the informal sector, although some 400,000 new job seekers are registered each year.

XI. Humanitarian situation

50. The humanitarian situation continued to improve, with more than 8,000 refugees returning during the first quarter of 2014. Of the estimated 300,000 Ivorians who fled the country during the post-elections violence, some 65,000 were still seeking asylum. Of that total, 43,613 were in Liberia and approximately 8,500 were in Ghana, 6,500 in Guinea and 2,500 in Togo. Following the outbreak of the Ebola virus, on 31 March the Government of Côte d'Ivoire requested UNHCR to suspend support for voluntary returns.

51. The attacks in Fete and Grabo (see para. 17 above), triggered temporary population displacement and may have had a negative impact on voluntary returns. The World Food Programme faced challenges in securing its food pipeline for

returnees from Liberia. The UNOCI force continued to escort repatriation convoys of Ivorian returnees and to patrol areas of return, while United Nations agencies trained FRCI soldiers on the protection of civilians.

52. United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations delivered socioeconomic programmes to communities with a view to supporting the sustainable reintegration of returnees, focusing on basic social services. A national strategy on durable return and reintegration being designed by UNDP in coordination with the Government and other United Nations agencies will be informed by a profiling of internally displaced persons led by UNHCR.

53. While organizations started shifting from emergency relief to development-oriented programmes, pockets of acute vulnerability remained in the west and the north of the country, requiring responses to address malnutrition, food insecurity and lack of access to basic services. Funding shortfalls hampered assistance to the most vulnerable.

XII. Strategic reviews of Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia

54. Over the next few years, United Nations engagement in West Africa will change considerably, as UNOCI and UNMIL continue the ongoing drawdown and eventually withdraw. While the trajectory in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia remains positive, there are still political and security challenges, as well as latent threats, which risk undermining the stability achieved over the past decade with the assistance of regional and United Nations peacekeeping efforts. In my report of 24 December 2013 (S/2013/761), I indicated that I would provide recommendations on the configuration of the UNOCI military component from June 2014 to the elections of October 2015, which is expected to be a sensitive political period. In that same report, and again in my report on UNMIL of 18 February 2014 (S/2014/123), I stressed that every precaution must be taken to prevent any serious reversal of the hard-won gains in the region. Prudent planning will be required to make sure that the two missions are adequately equipped to fulfil their mandated tasks and achieve their strategic goals prior to withdrawal. As UNOCI and UNMIL continue to draw down, it will be increasingly important to maximize the opportunities presented by their strategic and operational interdependence.

55. Against that backdrop, strategic reviews were carried out by teams led by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and comprising participants from the Department of Field Support, the Department of Safety and Security, UNMIL and UNOCI, who visited Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia from 7 to 19 February. The focus of the reviews was on the core political and security tasks of UNOCI and UNMIL. Military and police capability studies of UNOCI and UNMIL preceded the reviews. The strategic review teams received detailed briefings from the missions and consulted in both countries with a broad cross-section of national and international stakeholders. The team carrying out the review on Côte d'Ivoire met with the Prime Minister, Daniel Kablan Duncan, and government ministers; the leadership of the national security agencies and armed forces; the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the Authority for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration; political parties, including FPI; members of the diplomatic community, including representatives of the African Union and ECOWAS; and the United Nations country team.

56. The team carrying out the review on Liberia consulted with the President, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, and several government ministers; members of the legislature; representatives of political parties and civil society; the Governance Commission; the leadership of the national army and security agencies; members of the diplomatic community; and the United Nations country team. I intend to include findings and recommendations pertaining to Liberia in my report on UNMIL of August 2014.

57. The team travelled to Nimba and Grand Gedeh counties on the Liberian side of the border and to Toulépleu on the Ivorian side in order to consult with civil authorities and security officials; community representatives, including traditional leaders, women and youths; and Ivorian refugees and returnees.

Findings of the strategic review of Côte d'Ivoire

58. The political environment appeared to be improving, with the Government remaining committed to taking forward measures to ease tensions and invigorate the political dialogue while also generating economic development and putting in place conditions conducive to the return of refugees and others who left Côte d'Ivoire during the post-elections crisis. Notwithstanding those improvements, the strategic review team found that, according to its interlocutors, the 2015 elections would be an important barometer of the sustainability of the prevailing stability. Ensuring an environment conducive to peaceful elections would require overcoming political challenges in a host of areas, including with respect to taking forward electoral reforms in a manner that is inclusive and enhances confidence.

59. While the security situation had improved, pockets of insecurity remained, particularly in the west. Considerable tensions arose from land disputes, unresolved nationality issues and the population's lack of confidence in FRCI and affiliated armed groups, which were conducting most security operations. Armed robbery, racketeering and other criminal activities were rife, and many feared that there could be violence during the electoral period. There remained significant mistrust between FRCI, the police and the gendarmerie, particularly outside Abidjan, where FRCI led efforts in maintaining law and order despite the presence of the police and the gendarmerie. While improvements had been made with respect to the operational effectiveness and governance of the security sector, considerable political challenges remained. There were also hurdles to be overcome to enable the Government to meet its ambitious timeline of disarming the full caseload of former combatants by mid-2015, not least owing to remaining questions about the inclusiveness of the process, the future of former zone commanders and dozos, and the challenges in creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Border assessment and regional issues

60. The situation in the Liberia-Côte d'Ivoire border area had improved considerably since similar assessments were conducted in 2012 and 2013. There had been no major cross-border attack since March 2013, although there was an attack near the border with Liberia in February (see para. 17 above). Moreover, as indicated in my previous reports, while UNHCR exceeded its target of voluntary returns from Liberia in 2013, more than 43,000 Ivorian refugees still remained in the country. Several women returnees in Toulépleu who had met with the team conducting the strategic review were adamant that they were better off at home in Côte d'Ivoire, but requested more assistance in rebuilding their lives.

61. At the same time, the border remained highly porous and progress in building national capacity to address cross-border security issues remained slow in both countries. Officials on both sides of the border noted the absence of sufficient human, financial and material investment in border stabilization. Traditional chiefs and elders said they required support in establishing locally owned cross-border initiatives and advocated for an increased role for youths in confidence-building initiatives to mitigate the risk of their involvement in destabilizing activities. Pointing to security improvements, a government minister advised that the deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles in Côte d'Ivoire may no longer be necessary.

62. Improvements had also been achieved in the region, including as a result of efforts made by the Mano River Union and ECOWAS to reinvigorate regional mechanisms for fighting transnational organized crime. Many of the strategic review team's interlocutors expressed concern, however, about the prospects of a reversal of the current stability, given that several countries, including Côte d'Ivoire and two of its neighbours, Burkina Faso and Guinea, were going to hold sensitive elections in 2015.

XIII. Proposed adjustments to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire

Military component

63. As indicated in my previous reports, UNOCI has been drawing down its force, reducing the mission's strength from 9,792 military personnel in 2012 to 7,137 by 30 June 2014. The 7,137 troops include five infantry battalions, a force reserve, associated enablers and 192 military observers. In keeping with Security Council resolution 2112 (2013), the force is concentrating on the west and other high-risk areas.

Options for adjusting the military component

64. The military capability study that informed the strategic review included a thorough threat assessment, an analysis of the posture and composition of the UNOCI force, including a troop-to-task analysis, and proposals about the military strength required to assist the Government in protecting civilians and stabilizing the security situation in the country ahead of and during the 2015 electoral period. Taking those proposals into account, as well as the political and security situation in Côte d'Ivoire and the subregion, the strategic review team concluded that further reductions are possible.

65. Given the sensitivity of the electoral period and the remaining challenges set out above, it is strongly recommended that a prudent approach be taken to adjusting the UNOCI force. Such an approach could be achieved by withdrawing 1,100 troops between July 2014 and June 2015, leaving 6,037 military personnel. Repatriations could be conducted during troop rotations to maximize savings. Specifically, the adjustments would result, among other things, in the repatriation of 530 infantry and 542 additional personnel, to be achieved in part by: (a) reducing the number of military sectors from three to two, one covering the east and one covering the west, which would allow for the reduction of 28 staff officers; (b) withdrawing two of the

three engineering companies, which would mean withdrawing a total of 283 personnel and associated equipment; (c) withdrawing one transport company comprising 450 personnel; and (d) downgrading one military hospital. After the peaceful conclusion of the 2015 electoral period, it is recommended that an additional 2,000 troops be withdrawn by mid-2016, bringing UNOCI to a residual strength of approximately 4,000 troops.

66. In order to project military effect, the force would continue to consolidate its locations and bases, focusing on the west and other high-risk areas, while shifting to a mobile posture. UNOCI would also enhance its situational awareness and early warning capabilities so as to be more proactive and responsive. Implementation of this more robust concept of operations would take into account the force's mandate to protect civilians within its areas of deployment and capabilities, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Ivorian authorities, focusing on threats beyond national response capability. The force would also assist the Government in building the capacity of national defence forces.

67. The strategic review team considered the drawdown of 1,700 military personnel by June 2015, in keeping with the intentions expressed in Security Council resolution 2112 (2013), which would bring the mission's strength to 5,437 troops during the electoral period. This could be achieved by withdrawing two infantry battalions, in addition to the personnel detailed in paragraph 65 above. This would reduce the operational capabilities required for the 2015 electoral period, however, as well as disarmament activities. It should be recalled that during the 2010 elections UNOCI had a strength of more than 7,000 military personnel, a surge of 500 personnel and temporary military and police assets from UNMIL, which are no longer available given the drawdown of that mission. While no crisis is anticipated in 2015, as part of prudent planning, contingency measures would have to be put in place, with prior authorization from the Security Council, drawing on temporary support in the framework of inter-mission cooperation with other peacekeeping operations in Africa. Alternatively, bilateral or other arrangements would be required.

Establishment of a regional quick-reaction force

68. As mentioned in my previous reports on UNOCI and UNMIL, plans have been developed to establish, as part of the UNOCI authorized military strength, a quick-reaction force configured and equipped to address incidents in Côte d'Ivoire and, at the same time, to rapidly respond in Liberia in the event of a serious deterioration in security. The force would operate in the context of the inter-mission cooperation framework set out in Security Council resolution 1609 (2005).

69. On the basis of an assessment of the threats, required tasks and available resources, it is proposed that a 650-strong quick-reaction battalion be established within UNOCI. The battalion would comprise two motorized infantry companies and one mechanized infantry company, with support elements, which would make it possible to conduct multiple deployments simultaneously, if required. While the battalion would remain primarily a UNOCI asset, it is envisaged that it could also operate in Liberia, as required and authorized. The strategic decision to deploy the battalion to Liberia would be taken by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, on the basis of the situation on the ground and the respective threat environment in the two countries and taking into account the advice of my special representatives

for Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia. Command and control at the mission level would remain unchanged, while established modalities for conducting operations under inter-mission cooperation arrangements would be employed. With respect to the composition of the battalion, a troop-contributing country that is a State member of ECOWAS and has peacekeeping experience in both countries has been identified and, pending Security Council approval, an agreement will be formalized. Specifically, it is envisaged that the UNOCI force reserve, which currently comprises 450 troops based in Yamoussoukro, would be reconfigured and expanded. For the battalion to be effective and able to respond rapidly, expeditionary kits, as well as transport, logistical and other support requirements, will have to be available.

70. Mobility would be an essential aspect of making the regional quick-reaction concept effective. UNOCI has three armed helicopters based in western Côte d'Ivoire, the use of which has already been authorized, in both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, pursuant to resolution Security Council resolution 2062 (2013) and subsequent resolutions. The helicopters provide critical deterrence and should remain in the region until after the 2015 Ivorian electoral cycle. Moreover, it is recommended that all UNOCI and UNMIL military utility helicopters be retained and that a similar approach be extended, to allow all the military aviation assets of the two missions to be utilized in both theatres, thereby facilitating rapid response and mobility while not affecting the area of responsibility of either mission. The agreements with the troop-contributing countries concerned would be finalized following Security Council approval.

French forces

71. The strength of the French forces stands at 450 troops and is focused on supporting the Government in security sector reform. By its resolution 2112 (2013), the Security Council extended until 30 June 2014 authorization for the French forces to provide support to UNOCI, within the limits of the force's deployment and capabilities. This support to UNOCI remains necessary.

Police component

72. The authorized strength of the UNOCI police component stands at 1,555 personnel, including 555 individual police officers and 1,000 officers deployed to six formed police units. Given the challenges that remain to the national police and gendarmes fully assuming their statutory responsibilities, in the strategic review it was recommended that minimal adjustments be made to the UNOCI police component. Those adjustments would take the form of a reduction in the number of individual police officers from 555 to 500. The remaining officers will focus on supporting the capacity- and institution-building of national law enforcement agencies, as well as the implementation of the national police action plan, including with respect to vetting, and will also provide training, mentoring and advice on electoral security.

73. No reductions in the number of formed police units are recommended until after the electoral period, as these units will focus on supporting the national security forces and helping to mitigate security vacuums in areas of the country vacated by UNOCI military personnel. Their tasks will include public order management in support of the national security forces and the provision of

operational support. Joint patrols involving the formed police units and national security forces will continue, as a confidence-building measure.

Support implications

74. The reductions in UNOCI military enablers proposed above are possible in view of the generally good infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire and the prevailing stability, as well as the availability in the country of commercial alternatives for transport, engineering and medical services. At the same time, there will still be an impact on the reach of logistics support and on the mission's supply lines.

Safety and security of personnel

75. The risk to United Nations personnel is assessed as low in Côte d'Ivoire, except in parts of the west. Criminal activity, including robbery, burglary and banditry, pose the greatest threat. On 12 February, two United Nations staff members travelling from Yamoussoukro to Daloa were robbed, at gunpoint, of cash and their personal belongings by some 10 armed and masked assailants near the village of Zatta. Mitigating the risk would be facilitated by maintaining a robust security risk assessment updated and consolidating the locations where United Nations personnel are deployed.

XIV. Financial implications

76. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNOCI for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015 in the amount of $512.6 million has been submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration and approval during the second part of its resumed sixty-eighth session. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNOCI beyond 30 June 2014, the cost of maintaining UNOCI would be limited to the amounts approved by the Assembly for the 2014/15 financial period.

77. As at 29 April 2014, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNOCI amounted to $46.1 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as of that date amounted to $1,688.6 million.

78. Reimbursements have been made to contributing Governments for troops and formed police units, and contingent-owned equipment, for the period up to January 2014 and December 2013, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

XV. Observations

79. I am encouraged by the continued good progress being made in Côte d'Ivoire. The country is on the path of reconciliation, stability and economic recovery. The tangible gains being made give rise to optimism that it will soon reclaim its historic role as an anchor of prosperity in West Africa. I commend the people and Government of Côte d'Ivoire for their commitment to achieving lasting peace.

80. Under the leadership of the President of Côte d'Ivoire, the Government continues to make progress on critical issues while making important conciliatory gestures towards the political opposition. I urge all stakeholders to take full

advantage of the opportunity to move forward with an open and constructive dialogue aimed at overcoming the divisions of the past and agreeing on priorities for the country's future. The success of such dialogue would be measured by urgently making progress with respect to agreeing on crucial reforms, including on issues of nationality and land, and on the legal framework for elections. It is important that obstruction or non-participation in the dialogue does not prevent the country from proceeding on the path of stability. My Special Representative will continue to perform her good offices role in facilitating progress in key areas.

81. The 2015 presidential elections are already on the horizon. Given that peaceful elections have eluded Côte d'Ivoire since the crisis broke out in 2002, these elections will represent an important milestone of the sustainability of stability. It is therefore imperative to expedite consultations on reforms with all stakeholders in order to facilitate the creation of an environment that is conducive to inclusive, credible and transparent elections. The initial steps taken by the Government are commendable. Continued efforts will be required to widen the scope of discussions on sensitive matters. I note with concern, however, the unacceptable increase in inflammatory and provocative language and hate speech, including in the media. Those who fan the flames of intolerance and violence must be held accountable.

82. The significant number of Ivorians affiliated with the former regime who heeded the Government's appeal to return to Côte d'Ivoire is a powerful indicator of a restored sense of confidence, as the full participation of all citizens is an important marker of normalization. At the same time, healing the wounds of the past will require that all citizens have an opportunity to participate in a meaningful and inclusive national reconciliation process. I therefore welcome the extension of the mandate of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the successful piloting of its truth-seeking work. The Commission must remain steadfast in its efforts to help people throughout Côte d'Ivoire to tell their stories, an important part of the healing process, and include all citizens, regardless of political, ethnic or other affiliation. I would also call upon the international community to support its efforts.

83. Reconciliation would also be enhanced by increased efforts to ensure the timeliness, impartiality and perceived fairness of judicial processes against suspected perpetrators of human rights violations during the post-elections crisis, irrespective of status or political affiliation. I welcome the good cooperation between the International Criminal Court and the Ivorian authorities in taking forward legal proceedings aimed at fighting impunity and administering justice for crimes against humanity and other human rights violations. It is imperative that the Government remain committed to ensuring equitable and independent justice without discrimination, in conformity with its obligations under international law and in accordance with relevant human rights standards. In particular, I remain deeply troubled by delays in the investigation of major cases, such as the killing in June 2012 of seven United Nations peacekeepers and the attack on the Nahibly camp for internally displaced persons in July 2012. The perpetrators of those heinous crimes must be brought to justice.

84. I remain concerned about the human rights situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Attention must be paid to the protection of victims and witnesses, and consideration given to improving juvenile justice and providing the resources needed to reform the justice sector. I am also concerned about continuing reports of arbitrary arrest and

detention and of cases of sexual violence and child abuse, as well as of acts of killing, torture and ill-treatment. The rate of prosecution for these violations remains too low and the response to rape cases inadequate. I call upon the relevant authorities to do their utmost to ensure that fundamental rights are guaranteed to all citizens.

85. Important progress has been made in terms of reforming the security sector, including with respect to acknowledging the need to improve gender balance. National ownership of this priority issue is essential, as are measures to rebuild confidence within and between security forces and with the population. The Government should redouble its efforts in that regard. There are extremely sensitive issues that remain to be addressed, which also have implications for the success of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme. Despite the progress made, too many former combatants are still armed and unemployed, posing a threat to national security and the protection of civilians. I welcome the Government's ambitious target of disarming the full caseload by mid-2015; to do so, it will have to expedite the process, in a fully transparent manner. I call upon the international community to support the Government's efforts.

86. Côte d'Ivoire still faces threats to its stability. The root causes of its conflict, including with respect to land and nationality, remain to be addressed, while intercommunal conflicts contribute to instability. I am concerned that pockets of the country are still afflicted by insecurity, including violent crimes committed in many cases by the same persons who are entrusted with protecting the population. I therefore call upon the Government to ensure that appropriate disciplinary and oversight mechanisms are put in place, as well as other measures aimed at ensuring that the security forces act within their statutory limits and the law.

87. I am pleased that the situation in the west and along the border has improved, encouraging the voluntary return of refugees. Women are the backbone of their communities. The fact that women returnees have testified that the lives of their families have improved since returning home to Côte d'Ivoire is a powerful and poignant indicator that the levels of fear, distrust and perceptions of insecurity have decreased significantly. Most returnees, however, require additional assistance in rebuilding their lives; too many face serious delays in reclaiming illegally occupied properties or receiving other support, including basic services. I urge the Government and its partners to work closely with returnees to ensure their durable reintegration into their communities. Accelerating economic growth with a view to reducing poverty and inequality, particularly among women and the most vulnerable, is also essential. Côte d'Ivoire's economy is growing at an impressive rate and all of its people should reap the benefits of those gains.

88. I congratulate the President of Côte d'Ivoire for his effective leadership as Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government. Sustaining peace in any one country in West Africa requires peace in neighbouring countries. Regional security cooperation is therefore extremely important and I welcome the efforts of ECOWAS and the Mano River Union in this regard, which the United Nations will continue to support. Côte d'Ivoire has also worked to enhance relations with its neighbours, which has contributed to improved regional security, as has continued inter-mission cooperation between UNOCI and UNMIL. In order to maximize the strategic and operational synergies of the two missions, I plan to proceed in establishing a quick-reaction force within UNOCI authorized strength

(see paras. 68-70 above) and request the Security Council to authorize it to operate in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.

89. While significant progress has been made in Côte d'Ivoire and the broader region, challenges remain. I am convinced that it is absolutely essential to take every precaution to prevent any reversal of the hard-won gains made over the past decade. Therefore, I support the findings of the strategic review, according to which UNOCI remains essential and should continue to play an active role in support of the creation of an environment conducive to peaceful elections in 2015. I recommend that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNOCI, as established in resolution 2112 (2013), for a period of one year, until 30 June 2015, with a particular focus on its core political and security responsibilities. I also recommend that adjustments be made to the UNOCI military and police components (see paras. 65-66 and 72-73 above), resulting in an authorized strength of 6,037 military and 1,500 police personnel by June 2015. Should the 2015 electoral period be peaceful, a further 2,000 troops would be withdrawn by June 2016.

90. I wish to express my appreciation to my Special Representative for Côte d'Ivoire, Aïchatou Mindaoudou, for her excellent leadership and all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel for their commitment to peace in Côte d'Ivoire. My gratitude also goes to all troop- and police-contributing countries, the African Union, ECOWAS, the Mano River Union and other regional organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, non-governmental organizations and all other partners for their invaluable support to Côte d'Ivoire.

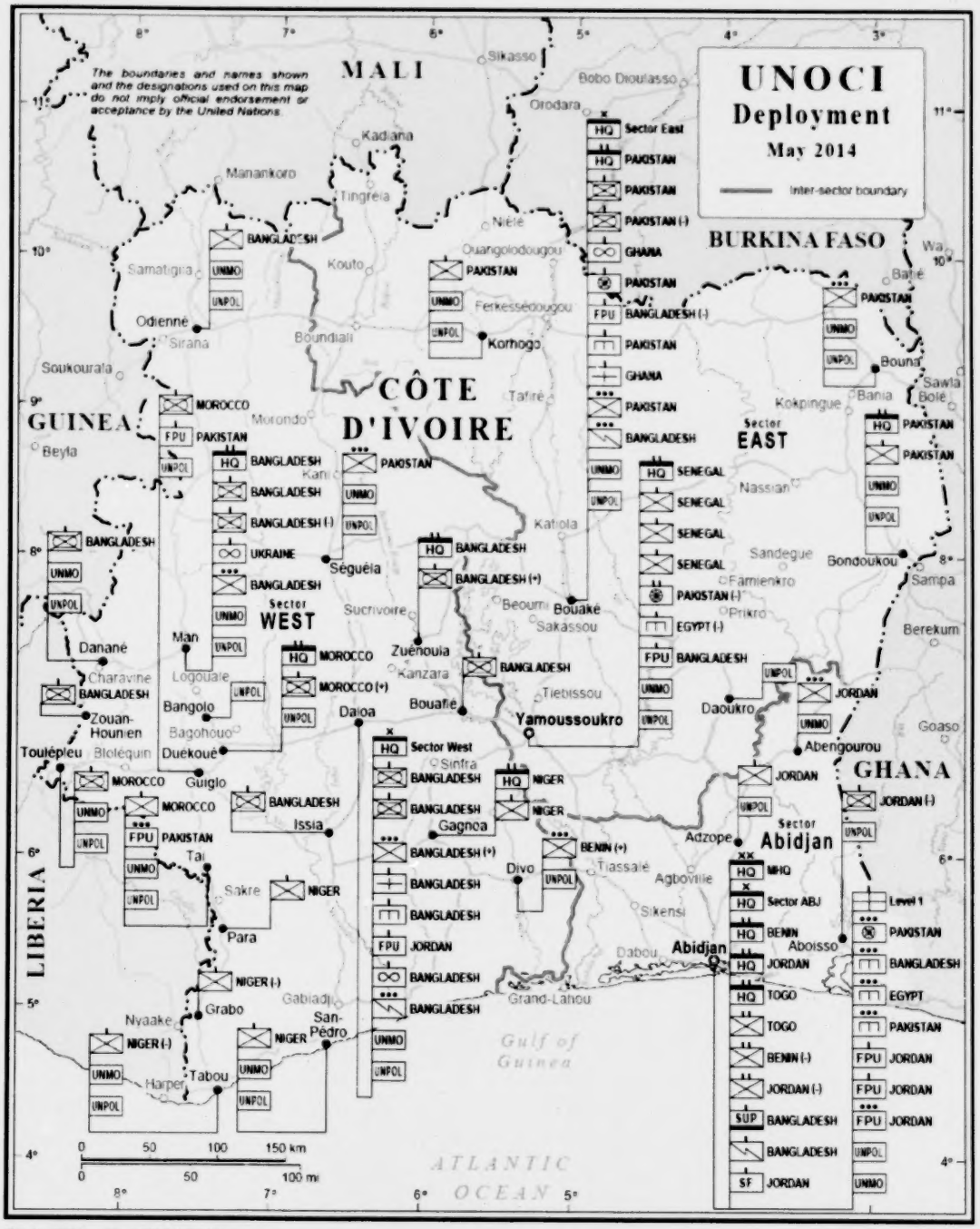
Annex

United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire: military and police strength

(As at 1 May 2014)

	Military component				*Police component*	
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Argentina	–	–	–	–	–	3
Bangladesh	13	9	1 677	1 699	180	–
Benin	5	8	369	382	–	51
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2	–	–	2	–	–
Brazil	4	3	–	7	–	–
Burkina Faso	–	–	–	–	–	42
Burundi	–	–	–	–	–	48
Cameroon	1	–	–	1	–	20
Central African Republic	–	–	–	–	–	6
Chad	4	1	–	5	–	23
China	6	–	–	6	–	–
Djibouti	–	–	–	–	–	23
Democratic Republic of the Congo	–	–	–	–	–	9
Ecuador	2	–	–	2	–	–
Egypt	–	1	175	176	–	12
El Salvador	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ethiopia	2	–	–	2	–	–
France	1	6	–	7	–	11
Gambia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Ghana	6	7	150	163	–	8
Guatemala	5	–	–	5	–	–
Guinea	3	–	–	3	–	10
India	8	–	–	8	–	–
Ireland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Jordan	8	11	1 058	1 077	490	15
Madagascar	–	–	–	–	–	23
Malawi	3	2	–	5	–	–
Morocco	–	3	723	726	–	–
Namibia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Nepal	3	1	–	4	–	–
Niger	6	4	868	878	–	42
Nigeria	3	–	–	3	–	4
Pakistan	11	12	1 367	1 399	190	–

	Military component				*Police component*	
Country	*Military observers*	*Staff officers*	*Troops*	*Total*	*Formed police units*	*Police officers*
Paraguay	7	2	–	9	–	–
Peru	3	–	–	3	–	–
Philippines	3	3	–	6	–	–
Poland	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Korea	2	–	–	2	–	–
Republic of Moldova	4	–	–	4	–	–
Romania	6	–	–	6	–	–
Russian Federation	11	–	–	11	–	–
Rwanda	–	–	–	–	–	41
Senegal	8	7	495	474	–	40
Serbia	3	–	–	3	–	–
Spain	–	1	–	1	–	–
Togo	8	6	463	477	–	23
Tunisia	7	3	–	10	–	19
Turkey	–	–	–	–	–	14
Uganda	3	2	–	5	–	–
Ukraine	–	–	38	38	–	13
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2	–	4	–	–
Uruguay	2	–	–	2	–	3
Vanuatu	–	–	–	–	–	3
Yemen	9	1	–	10	–	11
Zambia	2	–	–	2	–	–
Zimbabwe	3	–	–	3	–	–
Total	**195**	**95**	**7 277**	**7 356**	**860**	**517**


UNOCI
Deployment
May 2014
Inter-sector boundary
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
MALI
BURKINA FASO
GUINEA
CÔTE D'IVOIRE
LIBERIA
GHANA
Sector WEST
Sector EAST
Sector Abidjan
Gulf of Guinea
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Sikasso
Bobo Dioulasso
Orodara
Kadiana
Manankoro
Tingréla
Niéllé
Ouangolodougou
Samatigila
Kouto
Ferkessédougou
Odienné
Sirana
Boundiali
Korhogo
Soukourala
Tafiré
Morondo
Beyla
Kani
Séguéla
Katiola
Nassian
Sandegue
Famienkro
Bondoukou
Sampa
Prikro
Berekum
Sucrivoire
Beoumi
Bouaké
Sakassou
Man
Danané
Zuénoula
Logouale
Charavine
Bangolo
Bagohouo
Duékoué
Daloa
Kanzara
Tiebissou
Bouafle
Yamoussoukro
Daoukro
Abengourou
Goaso
Toulépleu
Bloléquin
Guiglo
Gagnoa
Adzope
Issia
Divo
Tiassalé
Agboville
Sikensi
Tai
Sakre
Para
Dabou
Aboisso
Grand-Lahou
Gabiadji
Nyaake
Grabo
San-Pédro
Harper
Tabou
0 50 100 150 km
0 50 100 mi
Map No. 4220 Rev. 53 UNITED NATIONS
May 2014
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Cartographic Section